DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 952 SO 012 460

AUTHOR Herrold, Rebecca
TITLE Introduction to Opera: A Guide for the Instructor.
PUB DATE [71]
NOTE 51p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Objectives; Higher Education; Learning Activities; *Musical Composition; *Music Education; *Music Techniques; *Opera; Teaching Guides; Teaching Methods; Undergraduate Study

ABSTRACT

A guide for teaching the essential musical elements of opera to undergraduate students is provided. The course centers around "The Marriage of Figaro" by Mozart. It is presented in four sections. In section I, students investigate type casting of opera singers in terms of the ranges of their voices. Students learn to differentiate coloratura, lyric, and dramatic soprano; mezzo soprano; contralto; tenor; baritone; and bass. Section II focuses on the opera composer's musical language. Students examine musical analogies, associations, and imitations. When listening to musical scores, students are required to locate examples of operatic analogies. Written definitional assignments are also included. Section III investigates the use of ensemble in opera. The ensemble allows two or more characters to sing simultaneously, thereby expressing two or more emotions to the audience. Students identify ensembles in "The Marriage of Figaro," "La Boheme," "Madame Butterfly," "Don Giovanni," "Rigoletto," and "Amahl and the Night Visitors." In the final section students analyze musical form in opera. Balance, symmetry, and contrast through statement/counterstatement, arrival and departure, and repetition and variation are studied. A list of appropriate readings and suggested questions and activities are included in each section. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED188952

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Rebecca Herrold

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

INTRODUCTION TO OPERA:
A GUIDE FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

BY
REBECCA HERROLD
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

SP 012 460

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES	2
III.	COURSE OUTLINE	
	Topic A: Type-Casting	6
	Suggested Questions and Projects for Students	7
	Topic B: The Opera Composer's Musical Language:	
	Analogies	8
	Associations	22
	Imitations	27
	Suggested Questions and Projects for Students	32
	Topic C: The Ensemble in Opera	35
	Suggested Questions and Projects for Students	38
	Topic D: Musical Form in Opera	40
	Suggested Questions and Projects for Students	44
IV.	AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS	
	Recordings	45
	Films	46
V.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	47

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This course is intended to provide undergraduates with an introduction to the essential musical elements of opera by centering their studies about one great work- The Marriage of Figaro by Mozart. The four broad topics to be considered for the semester include type casting, the opera composer's musical language, the use of the ensemble, and musical structure. Although Mozart's Figaro provides continuity for the course, selected excerpts from other operas will be presented to expand the student's awareness of opera literature and the styles of other composers.

Because the thirty one-hour meetings of the class will be devoted primarily to presentations and discussions about the important features of the music, the students are responsible for completion of reading and paper assignments dealing with historical facts that are important, yet peripheral to the topics designated above. This guide includes suggested readings that instructors may wish to assign to students. These and the listed recordings should be placed on reserve for students at the school's library and audio center.

Behavioral objectives have been developed for the course to help the instructor decide specifically which outcomes he wants the course to achieve in terms of changed student behavior and to establish criteria for judging its effectiveness.

CHAPTER II

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Topic A: Type-Casting

Concept: Opera singers are divided into six basic categories according to the ranges of their voices. These determine the roles they may learn to perform, as each operatic character is associated with a particular range and style of voice. [In Mozart's Figaro, for example, the roles were created for specific singers known by the composer.]

The student will, on a final examination, indicate in written form his recognition of these voice types upon hearing examples:

1. coloratura soprano
   lyric soprano
   dramatic soprano
2. mezzo soprano
3. contralto
4. tenor
5. baritone
6. bass

The student will, on this same exam, match roles, voices, and names of well-known opera performers introduced to the students on the recordings used in class and at the audio center.

Readings: Ewen, David. The New Encyclopedia of the Opera. (for terms and biographical sketches of specific singers and the roles with which they are associated)

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Topic B: The Opera Composer's Musical Language

Concept: Composers have used devices to give specific theatrical meaning to their instrumental music. Among these are analogies, associations, and imitations.

The student will during class sessions and on a final examination:

Locate in musical scores and indicate recognition upon hearing examples of operatic analogies based on

melodic contour
harmonic progressions
tonalities
instrumental timbres

Orally define and give written examples of musical associations in operas.

Orally define and give written examples of musical imitations in operas.

Write a brief summary of the basic principles presented in Herbert Spencer's essay, The Origin and Function of Music" as they are related to this question: What does music add to drama that drama does not already possess?

Readings: Bernstein, Leonard. The Joy of Music. "What Makes Opera Grand?"

Moberly, R.B. Three Mozart Operas.

Benn, Christopher. Mozart On The Stage.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Topic C: The Use of the Ensemble

Concept: One of the high points of opera that sets it apart from other art forms is the ensemble which allows two or more characters to sing sinultaneously, thereby expressing two or more emotions to the audience. [In Figaro the finales foreshadow the whole trend of operatic development in the nineteenth century. In the first of the two great finales in this work seven people sing and each is characterized. The musical numbers are welded into one. This idea of a continuous, flowing musical line reached its peak with Wagner who finally did away completely with separate musical numbers.]

The student will during class sessions and on a final examination:

Locate in musical scores and indicate recognition upon hearing ensembles from:

The Marriage of Figaro
La Boheme
Madame Butterfly
Don Giovanni
Rigoletto
Amahl and the Night Visitors

Readings: Bernstein, Leonard. The Joy of Music. "What Makes Opera Grand?" p. 292.

Kerman, Joseph. Opera As Drama. "Action and the Musical Continuity." p. 73.

Goldovsky, Boris. Bringing Opera to Life. Chapter 8., "Vocal Ensembles and Choral Scenes." p. 291.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

Topic D: Musical form in opera

Concept: Opera composers make use of the structural principles and procedures that concern all composers. They achieve balance, symmetry, and contrast through statement/counterstatement, arrival and departure, repetition and variation. In opera, these are related to the drama.

The student will, in class sessions and on a final examination, be asked to indicate orally and/or in writing the aspects of form that are evident in the answers to these questions:

1. What is taking place now?
2. How does this material relate to what has preceeded it?
3. How does it relate to what follows?
4. How does the drama govern the form?

These pieces will be examined in class discussions and will be the basis for the corresponding part of the final test:

1. Don Giovanni: Overture; Bb section of Scene One from Act I (small two-reprise form); first finale (tonally in rondo form); Act I no. 4 (da capo aria)
2. Marriage of Figaro: Act I, no. 7 (sonata form); Act III, sextet (slow-movement sonata form); Act IV, no. 25

Readings: Rosen, Charles. The Classical Style. Chapter Three, "Comic Opera."

Ratner, Leonard. Music the Listener's Art. "Form In Classic Music," p. 217.

Levarie, Siegmund. Le Nozze di Figaro: A Critical Analysis.

CHAPTER III

TOPIC A

The following examples of voice types may be played for the students, or, for greater impression, performed live for or by them. These arias have been chosen because they may be already somewhat familiar to the students and because they are derived from those operas that are investigated in considerable depth throughout this guide.

Colortura: Rigoletto, Act I, no. 9 "Caro nome..." sung by Gilda

Dramatic Soprano: Madame Butterfly, Act II "Un Bel Di" sung by Butterfly and Musetta's Waltz from Act II, La Boheme

Tenor: Rigoletto, Act III, No. 15 "La donna e mobile" sung by the Duke

Baritone: The Barber of Seville, Act I, i, no. 5 "Who is the most important man in town?" sung by Figaro
Carmen, Act II, "Toreador Song" sung by Escamillo

Bass: Don Giovanni, Act I, Scene ii, no. 4 "Madamina..." sung by Leporello

Tenor: Amahl and the Night Visitors (end of first half) Kaspar sings, "This is my box...."

Chorus: Faust, Act IV, Scene iii "Soldier's Chorus":

TOPIC A

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS

1. Which character in The Marriage of Figaro is held up to ridicule? What type of voice has he? Is any other character assigned this vocal range?
2. Did Mozart make fun of the privileged classes in any other operas?
3. Which female character in Don Giovanni has a role that parallels that of Susanna in Figaro? What type of voice does each character have?
4. What do the Countess Almaviva (Figaro), Elvira (Don Giovanni), and Madame Butterfly have in common?
5. How are Cherubino (Figaro) and Amahl (Amahl and the Night Visitors) alike?
6. Who is the tenor in Don Giovanni? Why is this type-casting an exception to the rule?
7. What type of voice is associated with each of these names? Prepare a list of roles appropriate for each one.

   Roberta Peters
   Leontyne Price
   Joan Sutherland
   Marian Anderson

8. Who are some of the leading male opera stars today? List several and the roles for which they are famous.

TOPIC B

Musical Analogies

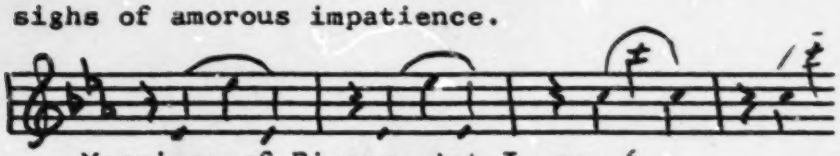
1. based on melodic contour and rhythm

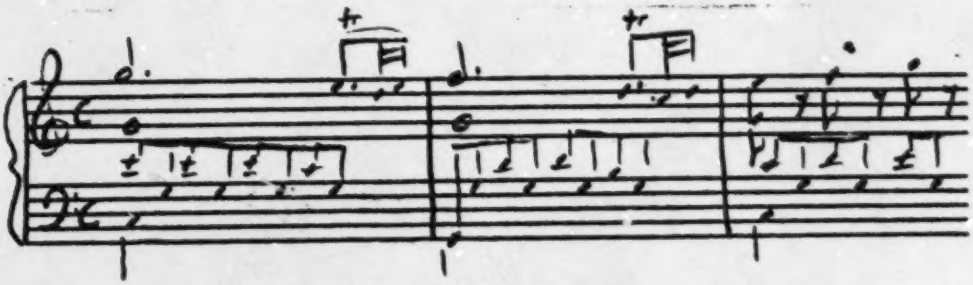
These analogies have their origin in speech. The spoken language is intimately connected with characteristic melodic gestures which convey feelings and moods sometimes much more clearly than the words themselves. Consider a mother calling her child:

The same word repeated three times is given three shades of meaning partly through the melodic contour of the notes. The growing anxiety of the mother is shown in the widened intervals and increased rhythmic tension. Herbert Spencer in "The Origin and Function of Music" from his Essays on Education wrote that "the degree of one's feeling is revealed in intervals: for to make large intervals requires more muscular action than to make small ones. Calm speech is monotonous, but emotion makes use of fifths, octaves, and even wider intervals."

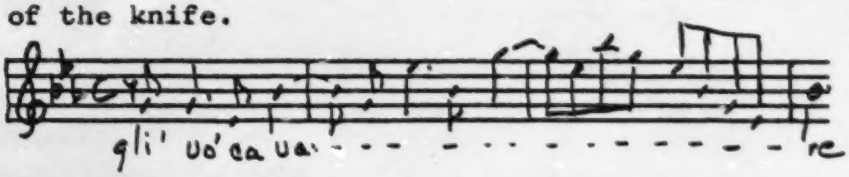
Examples:

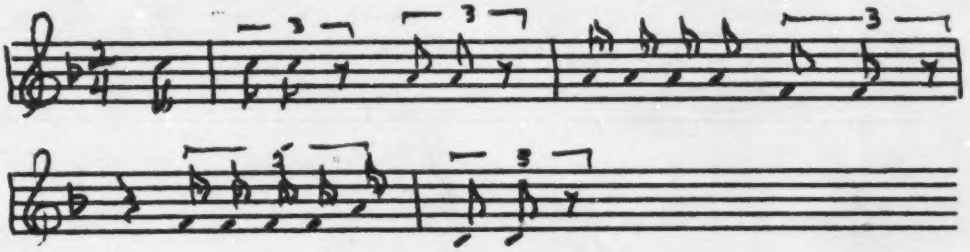
Mozart excelled in the use of melodic fragments to convey information: his operas abound in caresses, giggles, sighs, little heartaches, and gestures of yearning, often represented by orchestral passages. In The Marriage of Figaro Mozart used the same violin figure to represent sighs and

sobs, as when Elvira's or Countess Almaviva's unhappiness brings them close to tears. This melodic figure also represents Cherubino's sighs of amorous impatience.

Marriage of Figaro, Act I, no. 6

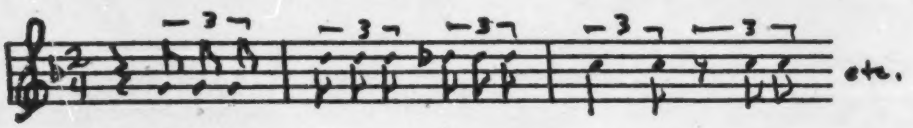
In the final act of Figaro the orchestra, at the beginning of Susanna's Recitative and Aria No. 27, serves to reveal her concealed amusement while she sings most seriously of her yearning for the Count. The orchestra "laughs" and gives her away.

Marriage of Figaro, Act IV, no. 27

In Don Giovanni the betrayed and enraged Elvira bares her emotions in a leaping melodic line. Her wrath is unmistakable when she sings "I'll carve his heart out" on a brilliant coloratura arch which suggests the twisting and turning of the knife.



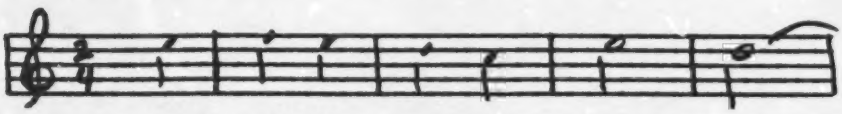
Puccini's La Boheme shows us how vividly music can expand mere drama into opera. At the beginning of the third act Mimi, the delicate little seamstress, is miserable because her lover, Rudolfo, has left her out of jealousy. The melodic lines which she sings to address a policeman and a milkmaid in her search for a friend, Marcello, reveal much more than the words. She is simply asking, "Excuse me , sir. Can you tell me which is the tavern where a painter is working?" But the melodic line to which these words are sung shows us that Mimi's health is failing:

La Boheme, Act III

This musical gesture is reinforced as Mimi strains to address the milkmaid: "Oh, my good woman, would you be so kind as to call Marcello the painter?" She makes a new effort to speak--the music strains upward. Then the line drops as her strength wanes. The drop is by half tones, the smallest possible intervals. The effect is of one long sigh.

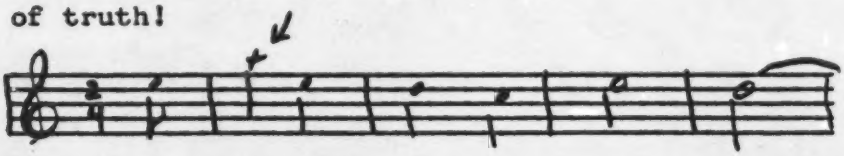


La Boheme, Act III

Rudolfo knows that Mimi is ill; that is why he left her. But he hides his true feelings and, to this tune, claims, "She's a flirt..."



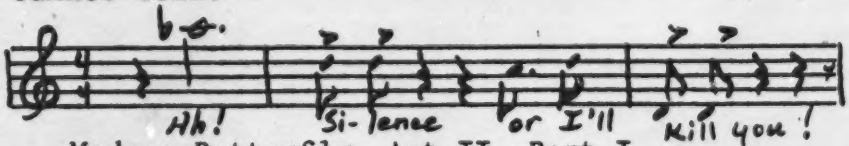
When Marcello challenges his sincerity, Rudolfo breaks down and tells the truth to the same tune with the second note changed. What emotion is carried by that one different note--the release of truth!



<u>La Boheme</u>, Act III

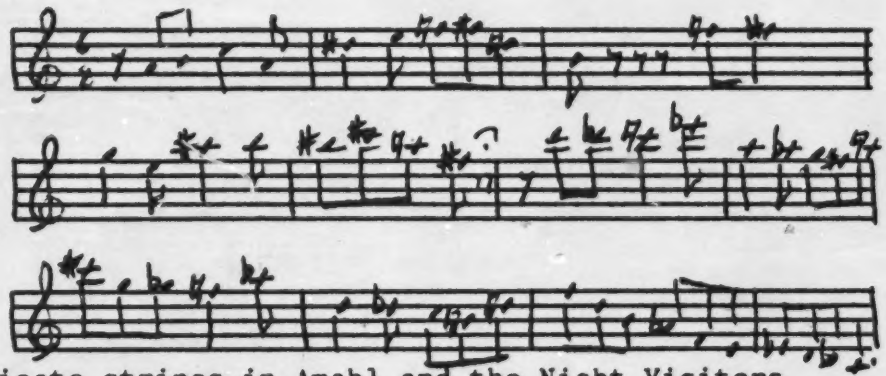
In Act II of <u>Madame Butterfly</u> the fury of Butterfly towards Suzuki, her servant, mounts as Suzuki tries to make Butterfly realize that Pinkerton, father of Butterfly's son, will not return to Japan to marry her. The orchestra in a rising gesture indicates the intensity of Butterfly's reaction to the truth:

Butterfly's entrance on the high Ab and her wide intervallic leaps disclose what mere words cannot tell.



<u>Madame Butterfly</u>, Act II, Part I

Gian-Carlo Menotti effectively uses melodic contour to describe the physical motion of the excitable crippled boy Amahl in his opera Amahl and the Night Visitors. When the three kings are knocking at the door and Amahl is told by his mother to "Go and see who it is," the pizzicato strings convey the boy's erratic movement up and down the stairs. The contour and accelerated rhythm tell us (and the director) where the boy is to be at a given moment in the scene and how his pulse must be racing.

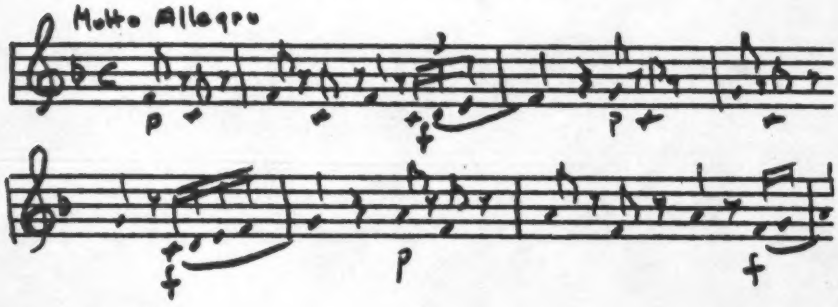


Pizzicato strings in Amahl and the Night Visitors

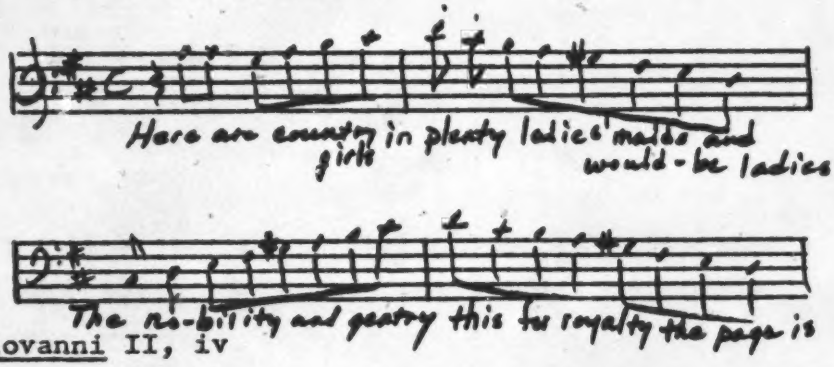
The melodic contour of the vocal lines in the same scene shows the excitement of the boy and the anger of his mother. Which word or syllable is sung on the highest note in these lines?

Amahl: There are two kings!

The Mother: I'm going to the door myself and then young man you'll have to reckon with me!

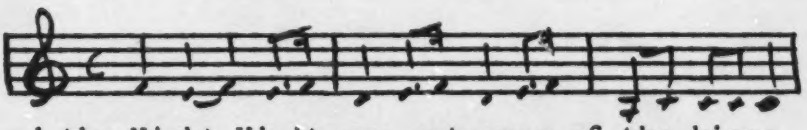
The rhythm of the music often dictates the motions appropriate for the singers on stage. A classic example of this vivid rhythmic type of direction is to be found in Don Giovanni at the very beginning of Act I. Mozart clearly indicates that Leporello should take three angry strides, turn, then take three more, turn, etc.

Don Giovanni, I i

Rhythm plays an important role in musical rhetoric and can reveal much about a character. The "patter" style of Leporello depicts his agitation, low dignity, and loss of poise; thus his rank shows. His famous "Catalogue Aria" incorporates the humor of pattering in a very delicate situation. He is telling Elvira the truth about Don Giovanni's many female conquests.



Don Giovanni II, iv

A slow, dignified march, on the other hand, reveals a high-born person; but marches are military and thus a suggestion of hostility is present. In Amahl and the Night Visitors the entrance of the rich kings into the hut of Amahl and his poor, widowed mother brings two emotions to the audience--that of the proud kings who believe they are on a crucial mission and that of the poor widow who is awed by and envious of the treasures they carry.



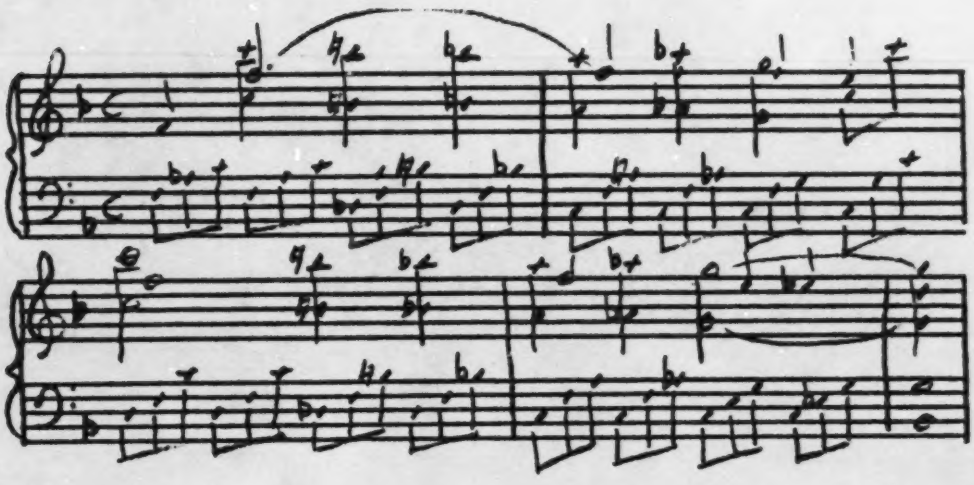
Amahl and the Night Visitors: entrance of the kings

Musical Analogies

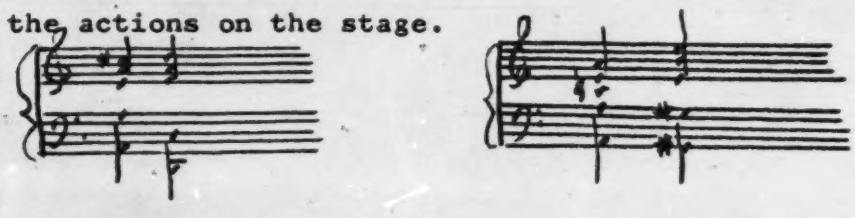
2. based on harmonic progressions

These analogies are more subtle than those based on melodic contour and depend to a greater extent on the listener's previous exposure to the musical literature of the past three hundred years. During that time the backbone of harmonic activity was quite standardized so that listeners came to predict the direction of harmonic movement. This standardization gave opera composers the opportunity to highlight an activity by deviating from an expected harmonic sequence.

Examples:

Mozart uses a harmonic progression to present the metaphysical mystery of death with great clarity in the opening scene of Don Giovanni. As the Commendatore dies at the end of the trio there is an orchestral postlude of five measures. The key of F minor is firmly established as the oboe plays a descending scale which is then picked up by a flute and a bassoon. The last G of the flute and the bassoon remains stationary and the leading tone (E-natural) fails to resolve into the tonic. The harmonic structure slides down, hovers on a new tonality, and evaporates into thin air. The orchestra is silent- The Commendatore's soul has left his body. [Here the director must take care that Donna Anna's father isn't lifeless before the music stops breathing. Mozart's directions are in the music].

Don Giovanni I, no. 1

Another harmonic analogy occurs in the same scene when, before Donna Anna faints, the harmony is moving toward D minor. Instead of the expected dominant-tonic cadence in that key, however, Mozart takes an excursion into A minor. This musical deviation gives theatrical direction for Donna Anna must not complete her fall and reach the expected D minor destination. If Don Ottavio catches her in his arms, the new harmony is justified. Again, Mozart's music dictates the actions on the stage.

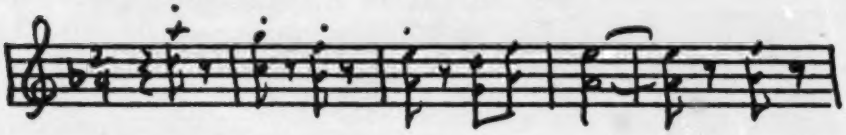


the expected

the unexpected used by Mozart

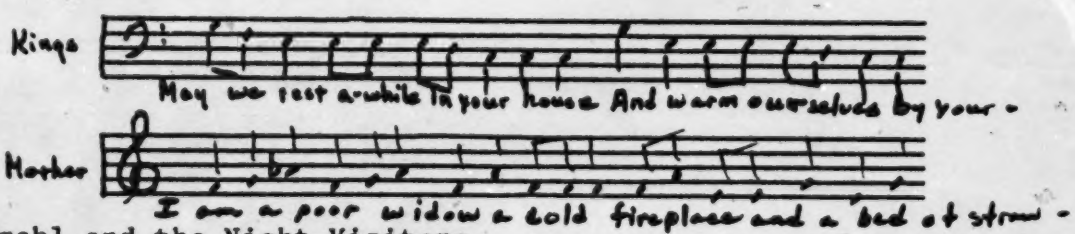
Don Giovanni I, no. 2

Puccini sets the atmosphere for the audience at the beginning of the third act of La Boheme. He wants us to know that it is very cold on the outskirts of Paris on a gray winter morning. Although the scenery, the lighting, and the bundled-up characters tell us it is winter, the music conveys the coldness so well that we can almost feel it. To achieve this effect Puccini uses cold, empty fifths.



La Boheme III, no. 1

Menotti uses the major-minor contrast to portray the sharp difference between the inner feelings of the rich kings and Amahl's poor mother:

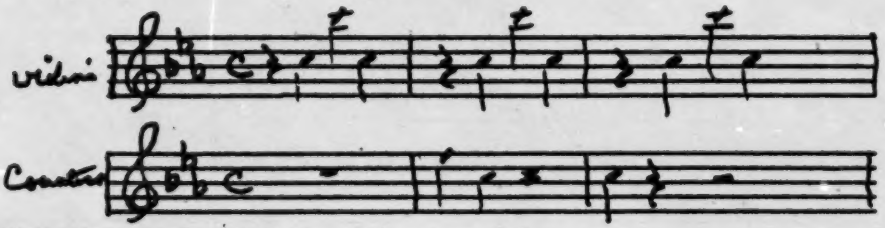

Kings
May we rest awhile in your house And warm ourselves by your -
Mother
I am a poor widow a cold fireplace and a bed of straw -

Amahl and the Night Visitors

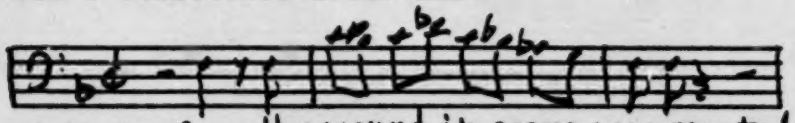
Musical Analogies

3. based on tonality

The linking of different tonalities with specific moods is one of the most interesting connections between music and non-musical phenomena. F Major is often chosen to represent a pastoral scene. D Major represents joyful celebration, C minor is pathetic, C Major is brilliant, and so on. When we know that a particular composer consistently associates the same keys with the same moods, we can be sure that a modulation to a specific key indicates certain emotions or actions.

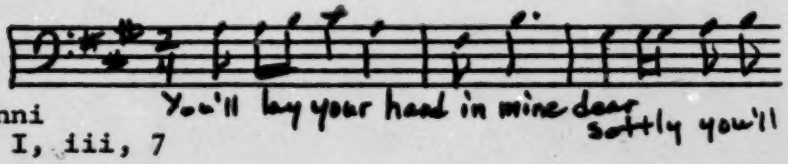
For example, Mozart associated tears with the key of F minor. In the finale of the second act of Figaro at the point when the count accuses his wife of infidelity, the countess must sob and weep. The tonality and the sighing violins dictate this, though the word tears is not in the text. The countess's broken vocal line further reinforces this evidence.

The Marriage of Figaro, II, no. 15

In Don Giovanni after the duel in which the Commendatore is killed, the exquisitely sad F minor gives us one of opera's most interesting moments when Don Giovanni seems to be behaving out of character. Has the Don a conscience after all?



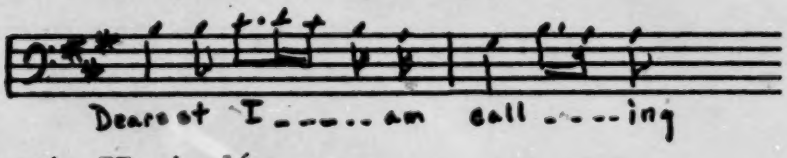
Don Giovanni I, i

Although Don Giovanni is associated with the tragic key of D minor, his wooing of the ladies is sung in A Major. One of the best-known duets in the opera is sung by Don Giovanni to, then with, Zerlina.



Don Giovanni
I, iii, 7

And later, trying to win back the affections of Elvira he sings:



Don Giovanni, II, i, 16

Musical Analogies

4. based on instrumental timbres

Analogies based on instrumental timbres use the sounds of specific instruments to relate to ideas, scenes, and moods. Composers have used the French horn to suggest the idea of a hunt or a forest, and the oboe, clarinet, and English horn to evoke pastoral life.

Example: The orchestral introduction to Amahl and the Night Visitors ...

Another connection frequently made is that of the pipe organ with the idea of a church or religious sentiments. The use of the organ in operatic church scenes goes back to Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable and since has been used in Faust, Die Meistersinger, Manon, and Tosca. Instrumental imitations of the organ are employed freely, alluding to churches or holy ideas.

Example: Carmen, act I (when Micaela refers to the chapel)

The meaning of analogies based on timbres varies from generation to generation. The sound of trumpets, once associated exclusively with royalty and the arrival of kings and queens as in Lohengrin, has become the war instrument. Trombones were once considered to have a mysterious quality well suited to depicting supernatural events.

Example: Don Giovanni, Act IV

According to a legend which dates from antiquity the husband of a faithless wife is supposed to grow horns. Many composers have connected the French horn with the idea of cuckoldry because the same word is used for that instrument and the betrayed husband's "horns" in Italian, German, and English.

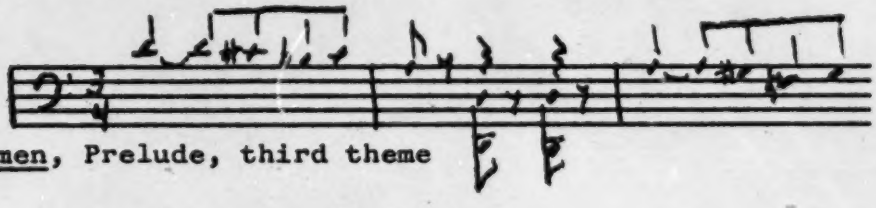
Examples: passage played by two horns in the second act of Falstaff

horn solos accompanying Figaro's lament over the fate of all husbands in the last act of Figaro

Musical Associations:

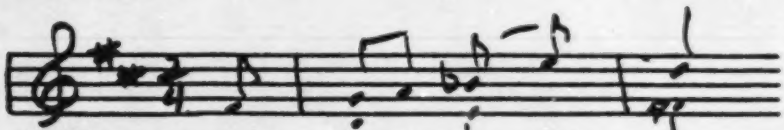
Composers may set up associations between music and situations or characters, basing them upon our ability to recognize and remember short musical phrases. If, for example, a musical phrase recurs often enough during a love scene, an association is created and the phrase then stands for the idea of love. If it is constantly used to allude to this emotion, it becomes the love motive.

Examples:

One of the most famous recurring orchestral themes is the "fate motive" in Carmen, first heard in the Prelude and then referred to in other places in the opera. To many directors and singers it symbolizes the basic incompatability between the gypsy's freedom and the soldier's stern discipline. His sterness and the interruption of fate in Carmen's life are shown musically in the D's of the second measure which contrast markedly with the melodic line.

Carmen, Prelude, third theme

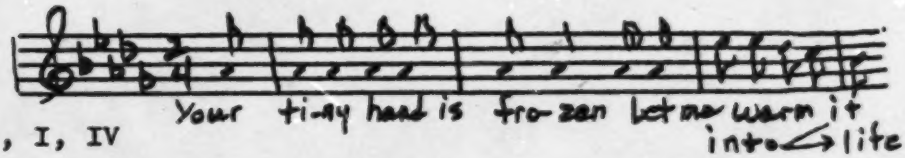
In La Boheme Puccini spotlights and strengthens actions on the stage in the last act by refer-

ring to familiar themes from preceding acts. When Rodolfo comforts the ailing Mimi he does it to the melody of her first aria in Act I.



La Boheme, I,IV

The first meeting of Mimi and Rodolfo is recalled as Mimi is dying. The music helps the audience remember the tenderness of their introduction when Mimi had visited Rodolfo's apartment to have her candle relighted. In a search for a key their hands touch and Rodolfo warms her hand in his while explaining that he is a poor poet, prone to be affected by beautiful eyes.



La Boheme, I, IV

The fickle Musetta who loves the painter Marcello but taunts him by appearing periodically with the old, rich Alcindoro, is represented by an appropriate theme which mimics her carefree laughter.

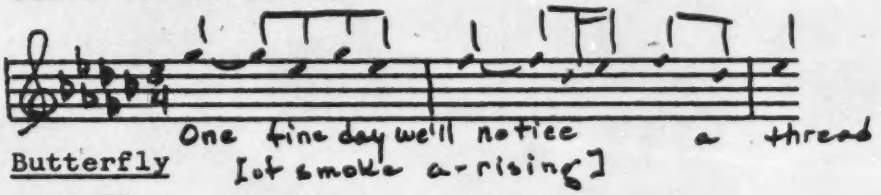
La Boheme, II, IV

In Don Giovanni Mozart uses the same motive for the two appearances of the dead Commendatore. This exemplifies the use of the association technique as it was used long before Wagner.

Don Giovanni:

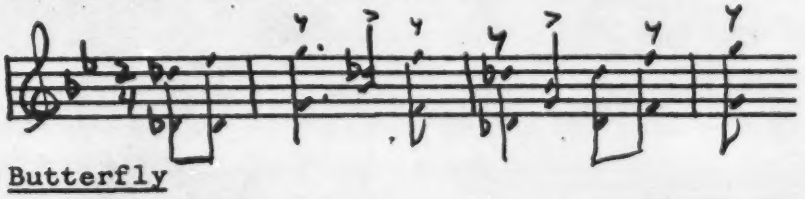
Overture, second theme; II iii and v
AND Scene V, 26--the d minor entrance of the Commendatore, first heard in the overture

A famous aria in Madame Butterfly tells of Butterfly's faith that her American husband will return to her. The poignant music is heard again when the cannon of the harbor is announcing the arrival of a ship; the audience knows it is Pinkerton's ship before this is confirmed in words.



Madame Butterfly
Act II

The "disaster" motive in this opera is heard as Butterfly prepares for her wedding to the American naval officer, Pinkerton, and again in the prelude to the final act in which Butterfly stabs herself.

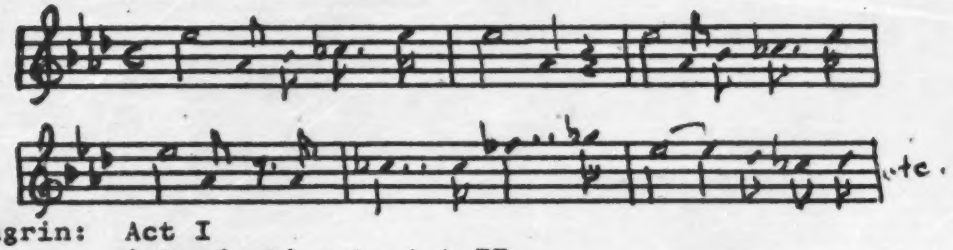


Madame Butterfly
I, Prelude to III

Richard Wagner developed the concept of musical associations further than his predecessors and created leitmotifs, which are not used simply to recall earlier scenes and actions, but to symbolize situations or abstract ideas. They recur, not simply as musical labels, but whenever the idea recurs or is suggested in the course of the drama, forming a symphonic web which corresponds to the dramatic web of the action. Wagner's motifs may be contrapuntally combined, varied, developed, and transformed in accordance with the changing nature of the idea with which they are associated. Thus, the transformation of motifs is quite like the working out of musical material in a symphony or other work of absolute music.

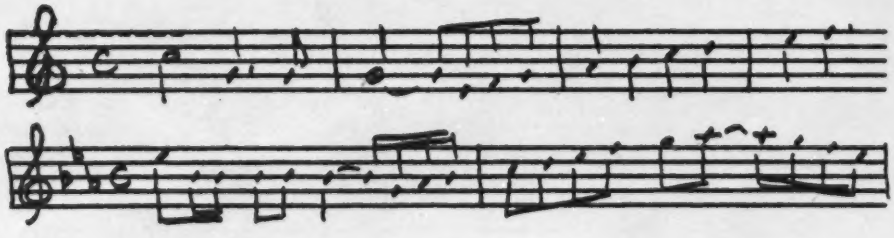
Examples:

An early example of Wagner's treatment of leitmotifs is to be found in "the forbidden question motif" in Lohengrin in which Lohengrin commands Elsa never to inquire about his name or country. This periodic, eight-measure theme recurs, in whole or in part, wherever throughout the opera the situation touches pointedly on this prohibition.

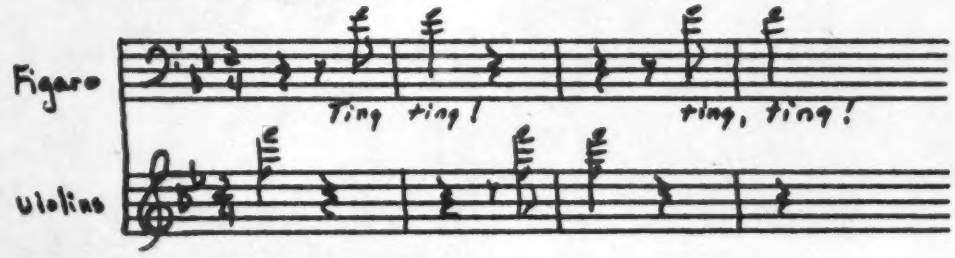


Lohengrin: Act I
introduction to Act II
Act II, scenes i, ii, closing orchestral cadence
Act III, duet
Elsa's entrance in the last finale

Since the inner meaning of the drama is found in music, Wagner concluded that the orchestra is the basic medium rather than the voices. He stated that the words were to "float like a ship on the sea of orchestral harmony." Thus, only rarely are the leitmotifs sung. With the orchestra at the center and the essential drama going on in the music, words and gestures function as the program which, instead of being printed and read, is explained and acted out by persons on the stage. In this way Wagner's music dramas may be regarded as huge symphonic poems.

One of the best-known leitmotifs of Wagner is heard in Die Meistersinger, one of the composer's late achievements and one of his most accessible works for the student. The following leitmotif is shown in its first appearance and then in one of its altered forms:

Musical Imitations

Opera composers from Monteverdi to Alban Berg have imitated man-made and natural sounds in music. Among the imitations of sounds are orchestral heartbeats, bird calls, storms, and even the whirring of a spinning wheel. Although these imitations may be quite convincing, they are not apparent to the listener unless a specific clue is given by words, a title, or a scenic picture. This interval, sung by Figaro in the first act of The Marriage of Figaro is an imitation of a bell used to call servants. The notes and the rhythm may convey this impression, but the words reinforce it.



The Marriage of Figaro, Act I

In Madame Butterfly when Pinkerton tells Goro of the approach of the Japanese women he says, " A crowd of women hustling, Like the wind in branches rustling..." This is imitated by the tremolo strings.

Madame Butterfly, Act I

An imitation can be so powerful that it has absolute veto power in opera telling the director what to do, and sometimes, what not to do. In Faust, for example, the whirring of the spinning wheel is clearly heard during the vision of the Prologue and during the spinning aria. The sound is not heard, however, during the Garden Scene, although Marguerite is seated beside the wheel. If Marguerite rotates the wheel during her song, she is ignoring the prohibition found in the orchestral music.

To summarize this section the instructor may choose to analyze an aria for the students from the standpoint of characterization which is achieved musically.

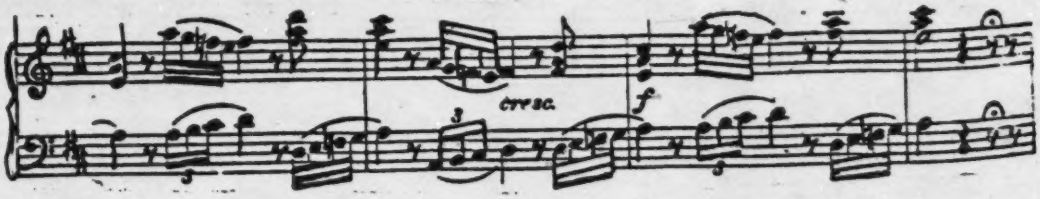
Example: "Vedro mentrio sospiro" from Figaro

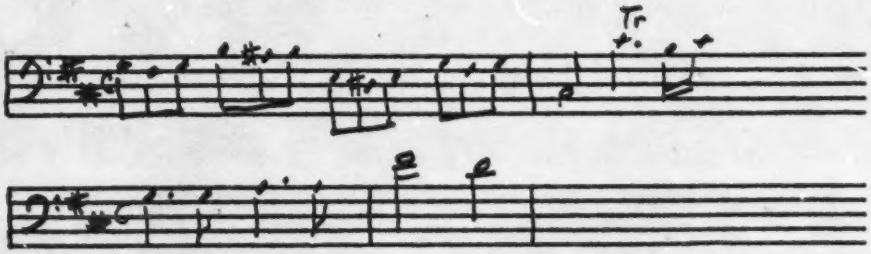
This aria reveals the desperation of the high-born Count Almaviva at his failure to win the affection of Suzanne, a chamber-maid betrothed to the steward Figaro. Perceiving that the domestic intrigue of his own design is making him a fool rather than a success, the Count decides in the course of this aria that vengeance against his low-born tormentors is essential if his self-esteem is to be restored. Mozart conveys to the listener those qualities of feeling which are inexpressible in words.

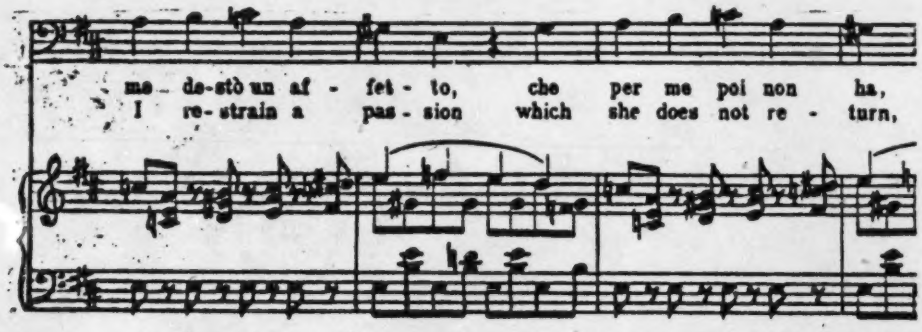
The sweeping two-octave figure which rushes downward at the onset depicts the plunging spirits of the Count who immediately picks himself up and resumes his customary lofty stance.

The maestoso tempo that Mozart chose to pose the question, "Shall I look on desiring..." is appropriate for the Count's pomposity. Yet the contrasting, busy accompaniment portrays a bewildered mind in the throes of decision-making.

Musical moments of stability are interspersed with unexpected figures which are set against a vocal line of rhythmic regularity. Thus, characterization is achieved musically, showing the Count's facade and, simultaneously, his inner turbulence.

The moment of decision (Vedro?) is preceded by a drive to the dominant in which simple alternation of tonic and dominant harmony discloses the reiteration of an important question. The intensity of the struggle is clearly indicated in the contrary motion of the accompaniment which is mimetic of a pull in two directions:

A quickened tempo, allegro assai, is maintained throughout the rest of the aria, which is devoted largely to the Count's vision of eventual triumph. Some of the dignity is lost at this new pace as the Count stoops to the thought of threatening the lives of those he already controls. The melodic line, previously unornamented and contained within an octave, takes on frank pictorialism at the close of the aria on the word "joy" depicted here by way of triplets, trills, and the highest note in the piece, F#.



The repeated E's in the bass of the accompaniment show the count "restraining a passion which she does not return." Again, oontrary motion hints at the inner tug of war.

Balance in this aria is provided in its division into two distinct parts: the question and answer nature of the lyrics cast in dominant, then tonic harmony with a grand pause separating them; the slow then faster timpi, the spirited then calmer accompaniment; the Storm and Stress features of the first section vs. the consistent, assured affect of the second. The topic of the whole may refer to the French overture with its stately manner and dotted rhythms.

TOPIC B

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS

1. What does the tempo of the overture to Figaro tell you about the pace of activity in the opera?
2. In Act I, No. 1 how does Mozart musically convey Figaro's indifference to Susanna's questions about her hat? What change takes place in the music when Figaro notices the hat?
3. Locate two imitations in Act I, no. 2.
4. What key does Mozart choose for the Count's pleading with Susanna to meet him in the garden? Act III, 16.
5. In what key do Susanna and Marcellina flatter one another? Act I, 5. How does your answer for questions 4 and 5 relate to key associations in Don Giovanni?
6. The choruses 8 and 8a are exactly the same in the score but should be sung with different feelings. Why?
7. In Figaro's aria no. 9 in which he pokes fun at Cherubino's military assignment, the tempo indicated is _____. Play or sing this in a military tempo. What is the difference in the intent of these two tempos?
8. In the Count's aria, no. 17, "Must I forego my pleasure while serf of mine rejoices," what does the orchestra reveal that the Count's vocal line does not?
9. How does Mozart create a musical analogy on the word "pride" in no. 17?
10. Despite her intense feelings of sorrow, the countess's

dignity is sustained throughout no. 10. How does Mozart achieve this musically?

11. In the Countess's aria no. 10 what harmonic change accompanies her fifth measure? Rewrite the harmony for measures 5-8 as though the countess did not feel heartbroken.

ANSWERS

1. fast-moving; rapid unfolding of complex plot

2. Figaro "measures the floor" on beats three and four as he sings an offhand, indifferent two-note figure. Her phrases are long, complete, continuous. She is using much effort to obtain his attention; he ignores her.

   When he notices the hat his answers are musical consequents of her statements--balanced in length and in sixths and thirds harmonically.

3. Ting ting...Knock knock

4. A Major p. 210 (Boosey and Hawkes publication)

5. A Major p. 40 (") . In Don Giovanni Act I, Scene iii, no. 7 is the aria, "You'll lay your hand in mine dear." This and other "wooing" arias are in that key.

6. The peasants should convey dissatisfaction with the Count's decision to delay the marriage of Susanna and Figaro. ("So I promise that I'll perform that ceremony, but at a later hour.") His decision is flanked by the two choruses by the peasants.

7. At this tempo the affect is less serious and hostile than in a true military pace.

8. It reveals inner turmoil. The voice sings in stately, French overture style, but the orchestra has busy accompanying figures. At the bottom of p. 217 note the "pull" in two directions. At the top of 219 the contrary motion is mimetic of a struggle.

9. bottom of p. 221
   much embellishment on the B

10. unbroken melodic line

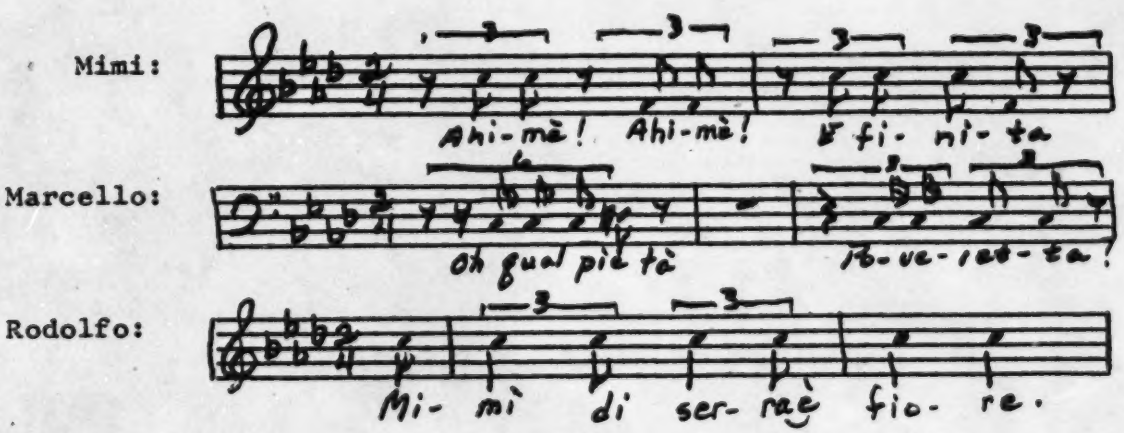
11. Instead of moving to the VI chord, one could remain on the I or move to IV.

THE ENSEMBLE IN OPERA

Composers use ensemble numbers to provide yet another expansion of reality that cannot be presented successfully in a play--that of allowing the listener to hear several emotional statements at once. Music can accomplish the miracle because notes are meant to sound simultaneously as words are not.

Examples:

1. When the main characters in La Boheme realize the impending death of Mimi each of the three suffers in a different way. Rodolfo despairs, Marcello mumbles helplessly, and Mimi gasps in anguish. Puccini's music transcends the words to give us a network of emotions.

Mimi	Marcello	Rodolfo
Oh God, oh God.	What a tragedy!	Mimi is a delicate
It's all over.	The poor thing.	flower, and she
My life is finished.	Poor little Mimi.	needs attention.
Oh, God must I die?	What a pity.	And I have nothing
		but love to give
		her.

A particularly striking ensemble is found in Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors. The three kings ask Amahl's mother if she has seen a child who fits the description of the one they are seeking . They have in mind the Christ child. She believes she has seen such a child--

> the color of earth, the color of dawn
> His eyes are sad, his hands are those
> of the poor as poor he was born...

In her mind, however, the child is her own Amahl. The ensemble reveals the hopeless frustration of the poor mother who is angered because the kings will bestow their riches on a child they have never seen. There is a child before their very eyes who needs help...

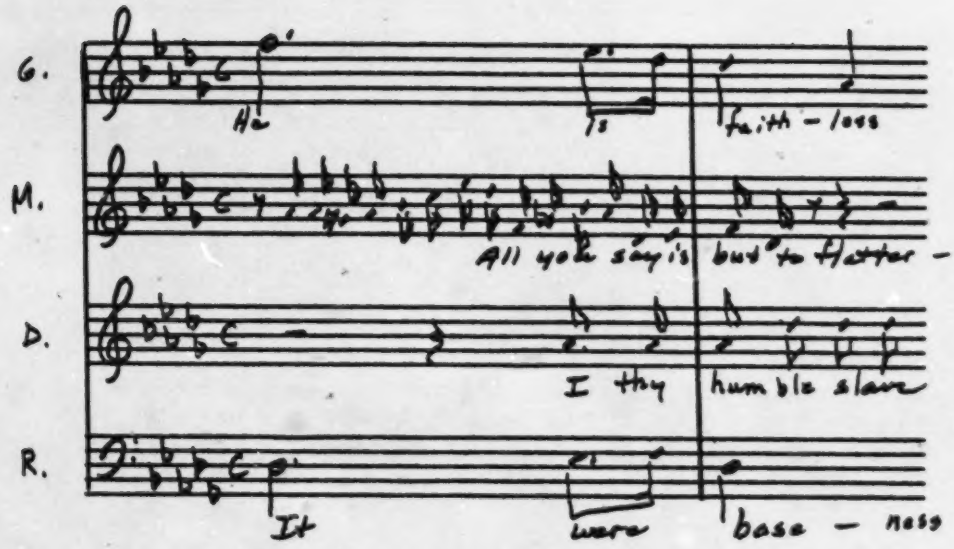
The Kings:

Choirs of angels hover over his roof
and sing him to sleep.
He's warmed by breath,
He's fed by Mother
who is both Virgin and Queen.
Incense, myrrh, and gold
we bring to his side
And the Eastern Star is our guide.

The Mother:

The child I know
on his palm holds my heart.
The child I know
at his feet has my life.
He's my child, my son,
my darling, my own, and
his name is Amahl.

from Amahl and the Night Visitors

In the famous quartet from Rigoletto, "Bella figlia dell' amore," contrasting intentions of the characters are woven into a musical texture. Rigoletto is here contemplating his plan to murder the Duke; Gilda is heartbroken over the infidelity of her lover; and Maddalena is making flirtatious responses to the Duke's overtures.

Rigoletto, Act III, no. 16 Quartet

TOPIC C

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS

1. What are the feelings projected in the Quartet from Don Giovanni, Act I, Scene III, No. 9?
   Donna Anna
   Donna Elvira
   Don Ottavio
   Don Giovanni
2. Which interval dominates the question, "Which ought we to believe?" Why is this appropriate musically?
3. What rhythmic change accompanies the words,"I'm beginning to feel a suspicion"?
4. What characters are united as mother, father, and son in the sextet, Act III, no. 18 from Figaro? The Count is one of the sextet--are his reactions to the truth similar to the others involved? Why or why not? How does Mozart show musically the feelings of the Count and Don Curzio the lawyer who state, "In confusion all our plans are," and "Fate decrees our overthrow."?
5. What are the conflicting emotions represented by the music in Act I of Madame Butterfly when Butterfly introduces Pinkerton to her relatives? Pinkerton is the only western person in this gathering. In what way does Puccini musically set Pinkerton apart from the rest of the ensemble?
6. In the famous Quartet from Rigoletto, "Bella figlia dell'amore," how is Gilda's intense disappointment in the Duke's unfaithfulness shown in the music? How does her music contrast with that of Maddelena? How does Rigoletto's music contrast with that of

the Duke?

7. After the mother steals the gold from the Kings in Amahl and the Night Visitors, the Page and the Kings are determined to take the stolen treasure from her. Amahl tries to protect his mother. How does Menotti show that the Page sees his role in this episode quite differently than the Kings perceive theirs? How is Amahl musically defined as the frantic, weak force against several men?

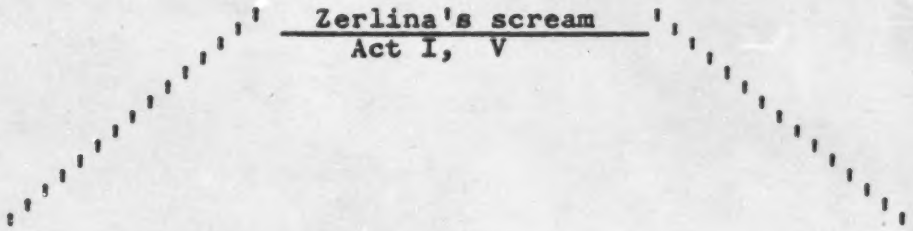
TOPIC D

STRUCTURE AND FORM IN OPERA

The following diagrams may be placed on the overhead projector to aid the students in understanding the elements of structure and form in selected pieces from Don Giovanni and The Marriage of Figaro.

French Overture (slow then fast)	Italian Sinfonia (finale) (fast slow fast)

1. Don Giovanni is bracketed by two types of overtures.



2. The fulcrum of the action in Don Giovanni is provided by the librettist Da Ponte. Before the scream, Don Giovanni victimizes others; after the scream, the other characters are against him.

ponte
I....V.....X.....I

3. A small two-reprise form is heard in Act I, Scene I of Don Giovanni. This is the Bb section beginning with Donna Anna's seizure of Don Giovanni and the words, "Till you show me who you are, sir, I will never let you go." It closes with the exit of Donna Anna and the harmonic change that accompanies the entrance of the Commendatore.

Beginning	First Finale	Beginning of Third Act	Second Finale
D Major (tonic)	E-flat Major (Neapolitan sub. dom.)	A Major (dominant)	D Major (tonic)

4. Regardless of four curtain falls, one recognizes the basic binary structure of Figaro in which the first two acts form a unit against the last two. This division into two halves was traditional in Mozart's day. In the first finale the dramatic confusion or tension is at its height, and the curtain falls on an unresolved situation. The second finale brings the ultimate solution. [In Figaro the tension is at a climax when Marcellina presents to the Count the contract in which Figaro has promised to marry her if he cannot repay some money she lent him.]

Exposition
- 1st subject m. 5.....T
- 2nd subject m. 43.....D

} 69

Development (m. 70.....S,D
False Recapitulation and recitative (m. 101..T

} 77

Real Recapitulation
- 1st subject m. 147.....T
- 2nd subject m. 168.....T

Coda m. 201.....T

} 75

5. Here, in the Trio, No. 7, from the Marriage of Figaro is an example of sonata form in relationship to dramatic action. In the exposition the Count is angry . In the development section Cherubino is discovered in the room. His unauthorized presence further angers the Count who gives further vent to his anger in the recapitulation. The emotion is the same, although the situation is altered.

6. The adaptability of sonata style to opera can be shown in the sextet of the third act of Figaro. It is in slow-movement sonata form without a development section (although the second group of the exposition is intensified here enough to provide some of the effect of a development.)

Exposition:

Theme a: Marcellina expresses joy at finding that Figaro is her long-lost son.

Theme b: Curzio and the Count express their irritation."(I'm astounded, I'm confounded.)"

Theme c: By Bartolo, Figaro, Marcellina
"I'm your father..."
"My long lost father..."
"I'm your mother..."

At mm. 26-27 there is a semi-conclusive dominant cadence as Susanna enters with the money (no longer necessary!) to buy Figaro out of his marriage contract with Marcellina.

[Bridge Passage:]

Theme c is repeated

Theme d appears with a turn to the dominant minor as Susanna is enraged at seeing Figaro kissing Marcellina (note the caressing violin motif here as Figaro tries to appease Susanna

Theme e, "Fremo, smanio dal furore..." precedes the firm cadence on the dominant which closes the exposition at the height of tension.

It remains for the recapitulation to resolve this situation. The classical composer had to find the elements of symmetry and resolution in the situation and in the words of the libretto.

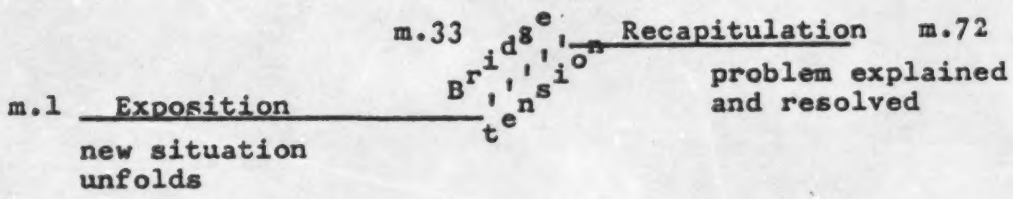
Recapitulation:

Theme a: this time heard in the winds of the orchestra because the words no longer fit the opening melody.

Theme b (variant) sung by a bewildered Susanna

Theme c is recalled in the concluding section in which all express their joy except the Count and Don Curzio.

The sextet may be diagrammed in this way:



SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND PROJECTS FOR STUDENTS

1. Make a diagram showing the tonal plan of the first finale of Figaro.

   [E-flat B-flat] [GCF] [B-flat E-flat]

2. Make a similar diagram showing the scheme for the last finale.

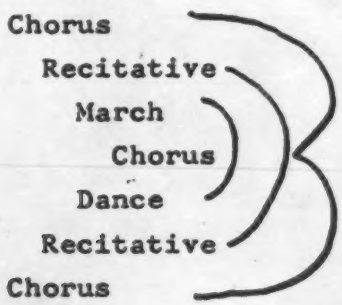
   [D G] [E-flat B-flat] [G D]

3. Why did Mozart usually write the last finale of an opera in the same key as the overture?

4. In what form is the Duet No. 14 of Figaro sung by Susanna and Cherubino? How does the form in the music relate to the dramatic action?

5. Cherubino's Arietta no. 11 shows his attempt to be a nobleman. The lyrics are in the form of an Italian sonnet--two quatrains followed by a sestet. Does the music adhere to this pattern?

6. Diagram the sequence of musical events in the Finale no. 22 in C Major from Figaro. Notice the underlying plan.



AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Recordings:

from Learning Arts (1976 catalogue)
P.O. Box 917
Wichita, Kansas

These recordings are designated by the company as college level.

1. Opera Gala
   2- 33 1/3 $6.98
   Arias and scenes from La Boheme, Louisa, Carmen, Julius Caesar, Norma, Lucretia Borgia, Rigoletto, La Traviata, Turnadot, La Juive, L'Africaine, Il Tabarro, Werther

2. Opera Highlights
   $5.98
   Bizet: Carmen
   Mozart: Marriage of Figaro
   Puccini: La Boheme
   Puccini: Madama Butterfly
   Rossini: Barber of Seville
   Verdi: Aida
   Verdi: Rigoletto
   Verdi: Falstaff

3. From "The New Oxford History of Music"
   Handbook and Recordings
   Album V: 2- 33 1/3 rpm $14.50
   Opera and Church Music 1630-1750

Filmstrip and Recording:
"The Marriage of Figaro" $12.50

Selected Films:

available at the

Educational Media Center
1555 Berger Drive
San Jose, Cal. 95122

#1584 Don Pasquale

#1586 Lucia Di Lammermoor

#3982 Marian Anderson, Contralto

#7724 Opera With Henry Butler

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bauer, Marion and Ethel Peyser. How Opera Grew. New York: Putnam and Sons, 1956.

Benn, Christopher. Mozart on the Stage. London: Benn Ltd., 1956.

Bernstein, Leonard. The Joy of Music. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959.

Dent, Edward. Mozart's Operas. London: Oxford University Press, 1947.

Fellner, Rudolf. Opera Themes and Plots. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958.

Goldovsky, Boris. Bringing Opera to Life. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968.

Grout, Donald. A Short History of Opera. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.

Kerman, Joseph. Opera As Drama. New York: Knopf. 1956.

Levarie, Siegmund. Le Nozze di Figaro: A Critical Analysis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952.

Longyear, Rey M. Nineteenth Century Romanticism in Music. Englewood-Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Co. 1959.

Moberly, R.B. Three Mozart Operas. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1967.

Pauly, Reinhard. Music in the Classic Period. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1955.

Rosen, Charles. The Classical Style. New York: Viking Press, 1971.